

# WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS FOR NORTHWEST WISCONSIN COUNTIES

DECEMBER 2001



State of Wisconsin  
Department of Workforce Development

## Unemployment near seasonal norm for November

Annual average wages increase, but remain below state wages (see table page 2)

Unemployment in Northwest Wisconsin increased in November, but the unemployment rate this year is only one-tenth of percentage point higher than one year ago. According to estimates released by the Department of Workforce Development the November unemployment rate for the ten-county region of Northwest Wisconsin was 5.1 percent, up from 3.8 percent in October, but only slightly higher than the 5.0 percent rate of last November.

The regional unemployment rate is higher than the unadjusted rate in the State of Wisconsin of 4.3 percent, but lower than the national rate of 5.5 percent. Seasonally adjusted the state rate was 4.7 percent while the national rate was 5.7 percent in November.

Each of the ten counties reported a higher rate in November, as did 68 of the state's 72 counties. The highest rate in the region, and third highest in the state, occurred in Iron County with 7.6 percent unemployed. The 4.1 percent unemployment rate in Price County, was the lowest in the region but 45<sup>th</sup> highest in the state.

The number of residents who were unemployed in Northwest Wisconsin increased to 4,700 in November. The increase from October to November is very typical for the season and the number of unemployed this year is only 100 higher than last November. Even though the current unemployment rate is higher than last year it is the fifth lowest November unemployment rate on record.

Unemployment in Northwest Wisconsin is very seasonal and claims for unemployment compensation increase significantly during the last weeks of November. During the

week that ended November 17<sup>th</sup>, the week used to estimate unemployment nationwide, there were 2,256 claims filed for unemployment compensation benefits this year compared with 1,904 during the same week last year.

The number of residents filing claims increased to over 4,000 during the week that included Thanksgiving, but has since declined to 3,665 claims during the December survey week. That is higher than in November and is a good predictor of the December unemployment rate. It is only slightly higher than one year ago, however.

Most of those filing claims for unemployment compensation were laid off from area manufacturers and many of those claims were filed before November. Production employment during the month changed very little, except in Price County where workers were busy producing holiday garlands and wreaths. Much of the increase in unemployment claims came from an influx of construction and tourism-related workers.

Retail trade and service employment declined by nearly 800 jobs in November. The counties reporting the greatest reductions were Douglas, Sawyer, Ashland and Bayfield. All ten counties reported a reduction in construction workers but because of more projects and the warm weather employment remained higher than last November.

The total number of jobs in the area is higher than one year ago. There were 74,000 jobs in the northwest area in November, 650 more than one year ago. All industries, except manufacturing, reported an increase in jobs.

### Labor Force Estimates - not seasonally adjusted

| November Data                     | Wisconsin | Ashland | Bayfield | Burnett | Douglas | Iron  | Price | Rusk  | Sawyer | Taylor | Washburn |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|---------|----------|---------|---------|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|----------|
| <b>Civilian Labor Force*</b>      | 3,049,800 | 7,700   | 7,400    | 7,300   | 23,500  | 3,500 | 6,700 | 7,200 | 9,900  | 10,800 | 8,300    |
| Employed                          | 2,919,500 | 7,200   | 6,900    | 6,900   | 22,400  | 3,300 | 6,500 | 6,800 | 9,400  | 10,400 | 7,900    |
| Unemployed                        | 130,300   | 500     | 500      | 400     | 1,100   | 300   | 300   | 300   | 500    | 500    | 400      |
| Unemployment rate(%)              | 4.3%      | 6.8%    | 6.2%     | 5.3%    | 4.5%    | 7.6%  | 4.1%  | 4.7%  | 4.9%   | 4.5%   | 5.1%     |
| <b>Change from previous month</b> |           |         |          |         |         |       |       |       |        |        |          |
| <b>Civilian Labor Force*</b>      | 600       | -100    | 0        | -100    | 100     | 100   | -100  | -100  | -100   | -100   | 0        |
| Employed                          | -11,300   | -200    | -200     | -200    | 0       | 0     | 0     | -100  | -300   | -300   | -100     |
| Unemployed                        | 11,800    | 100     | 200      | 100     | 100     | 200   | 100   | 0     | 200    | 200    | 100      |
| Unemployment rate(%)              | 0.4%      | 2.0%    | 2.6%     | 1.2%    | 0.4%    | 3.4%  | 0.5%  | 0.2%  | 1.7%   | 1.8%   | 1.1%     |
| <b>Change from one year ago</b>   |           |         |          |         |         |       |       |       |        |        |          |
| <b>Civilian Labor Force*</b>      | 55,300    | -100    | -100     | 100     | 200     | 200   | -400  | 0     | 400    | 100    | 100      |
| Employed                          | 12,400    | -100    | -100     | 0       | 0       | 200   | 0     | 0     | 400    | 200    | 100      |
| Unemployed                        | 42,900    | 0       | 0        | 100     | 300     | 100   | -200  | -100  | 0      | 0      | 0        |
| Unemployment rate(%)              | 1.4%      | 0.2%    | 0.1%     | 1.5%    | 0.9%    | 2.5%  | -3.2% | -0.8% | -0.3%  | -0.2%  | 0.3%     |

\* Includes participants residing in area. Estimates are NOT seasonally adjusted. Current month estimates are preliminary. Calculations based on unrounded numbers

### Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment

| November Data                      | Wisconsin | Ashland | Bayfield | Burnett | Douglas | Iron  | Price | Rusk  | Sawyer | Taylor | Washburn |
|------------------------------------|-----------|---------|----------|---------|---------|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|----------|
| <b>Total jobs, all industries*</b> | 2,854,450 | 8,490   | 3,890    | 4,760   | 18,850  | 2,570 | 6,500 | 6,210 | 6,880  | 9,270  | 6,370    |
| Construction & Mining              | 131,040   | 380     | 260      | 300     | 1,130   | 340   | 310   | 250   | 340    | 410    | 310      |
| Manufacturing                      | 579,260   | 1,610   | 250      | 1,030   | 1,240   | 560   | 2,460 | 2,490 | 850    | 3,480  | 1,240    |
| Transportation & Pbl.Util.         | 136,040   | 220     | 250      | 140     | 2,400   | 60    | 130   | 240   | 180    | 460    | 290      |
| Wholesale Trade                    | 137,320   | 190     | 50       | 50      | 1,130   | 70    | 220   | 120   | 120    | 460    | 140      |
| Retail Trade                       | 512,030   | 1,680   | 710      | 930     | 3,780   | 590   | 1,010 | 840   | 1,610  | 1,550  | 1,420    |
| Finance,Ins,Real Estate            | 152,670   | 280     | 150      | 100     | 500     | 30    | 200   | 130   | 310    | 360    | 220      |
| Services                           | 783,830   | 2,280   | 740      | 750     | 5,270   | 410   | 1,150 | 760   | 1,510  | 1,480  | 1,300    |
| Government                         | 422,260   | 1,850   | 1,480    | 1,480   | 3,420   | 500   | 1,020 | 1,390 | 1,980  | 1,060  | 1,440    |

#### Change from previous month

|                                    |        |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |      |     |     |
|------------------------------------|--------|------|------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|
| <b>Total jobs, all industries*</b> | -5,310 | -190 | -150 | -80 | -280 | 60  | 50  | 30  | -200 | -90 | -50 |
| Construction & Mining              | -5,420 | -20  | -20  | -10 | -60  | -40 | 10  | -20 | -20  | -80 | -10 |
| Manufacturing                      | -5,710 | -30  | 10   | 0   | -10  | 70  | 110 | 60  | -10  | 10  | 30  |
| Transportation & Pbl.Util.         | -1,220 | 0    | -10  | 0   | 10   | 0   | 0   | -10 | 0    | 0   | 0   |
| Wholesale Trade                    | -560   | 10   | 0    | 0   | -20  | 0   | -10 | 0   | 0    | 10  | 0   |
| Retail Trade                       | 8,230  | -50  | -90  | -30 | 40   | 0   | 0   | 10  | -100 | 20  | -40 |
| Finance,Ins,Real Estate            | 130    | 0    | 0    | -30 | -10  | 0   | 10  | 0   | 10   | 0   | 0   |
| Services                           | -4,410 | -80  | -60  | -20 | -210 | 0   | -30 | -20 | -90  | 0   | -50 |
| Government                         | 3,650  | -10  | 20   | 10  | -30  | 20  | -20 | 10  | 10   | -60 | 10  |

#### Change from one year ago

|                                    |         |      |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|------------------------------------|---------|------|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| <b>Total jobs, all industries*</b> | -16,440 | -370 | 150 | -20 | 390  | 180 | -50 | -10 | 230 | 120 | 30  |
| Construction & Mining              | -3,460  | -70  | 10  | 20  | 30   | 10  | 60  | 20  | 0   | 20  | 20  |
| Manufacturing                      | -35,180 | -60  | 10  | -30 | -110 | 100 | -80 | 30  | -20 | 0   | -50 |
| Transportation & Pbl.Util.         | 120     | 0    | 10  | 0   | 240  | 0   | 0   | -10 | 10  | 20  | -20 |
| Wholesale Trade                    | -1,480  | 10   | 0   | -10 | 80   | 10  | 20  | 0   | -10 | 10  | 10  |
| Retail Trade                       | 1,520   | 50   | 0   | 30  | 40   | 10  | 20  | 10  | 40  | 30  | 30  |
| Finance,Ins,Real Estate            | 3,060   | 10   | 10  | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0   | 0   | 20  | 20  | 0   |
| Services                           | 12,020  | -20  | 0   | -90 | 150  | -10 | -20 | -90 | 60  | 20  | 40  |
| Government                         | 6,960   | -280 | 110 | 80  | -30  | 70  | -50 | 30  | 130 | 10  | 10  |

\*\* Includes employment with employers located in area. Current month estimates are preliminary. Calculations based on unrounded numbers.

#### 2000 Average Annual Wage

|                                     | Wisc     | Ashland  | Bayfield | Burnett  | Douglas  | Iron     | Price    | Rusk     | Sawyer   | Taylor   | Washburn |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>Goods Producing Industries</b>   |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Construction                        | \$37,764 | \$32,560 | \$21,612 | \$21,720 | \$35,712 | \$26,510 | \$24,902 | \$23,923 | \$23,272 | \$31,177 | \$22,060 |
| Mining                              | \$42,099 | *        | --       | *        | *        | *        | --       | *        | *        | *        | --       |
| Manufacturing                       | \$39,015 | \$28,716 | \$25,493 | \$30,585 | \$35,762 | \$21,905 | \$33,665 | \$26,221 | \$31,937 | \$29,912 | \$24,698 |
| Durable Goods                       | \$39,816 | \$30,325 | \$26,752 | \$32,103 | \$35,833 | \$24,666 | \$31,940 | \$25,629 | \$31,971 | \$28,991 | \$25,138 |
| Nondrbl.Goods                       | \$37,764 | \$16,549 | \$19,300 | \$25,484 | \$35,633 | \$14,787 | \$36,799 | \$29,064 | \$32,007 | \$31,653 | \$23,948 |
| <b>Service Producing Industries</b> |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Agric, Forestry & Fishing           | \$21,956 | \$30,630 | \$10,090 | \$22,491 | \$13,585 | \$11,659 | \$17,762 | \$18,357 | \$14,495 | \$22,206 | \$16,369 |
| Transportation & Pbl.Util.          | \$35,678 | \$28,940 | \$27,041 | \$31,233 | \$39,646 | \$14,872 | \$28,707 | \$31,117 | \$22,041 | \$29,453 | \$16,123 |
| Wholesale Trade                     | \$39,539 | \$27,096 | \$21,154 | \$41,057 | \$34,636 | \$30,228 | \$22,221 | \$23,190 | \$38,116 | \$26,411 | \$24,453 |
| Retail Trade                        | \$15,850 | \$12,782 | \$10,563 | \$11,433 | \$13,252 | \$11,405 | \$12,083 | \$12,454 | \$13,941 | \$11,305 | \$13,200 |
| Finance,Ins,Real Estate             | \$39,554 | \$22,238 | \$23,977 | \$18,972 | \$25,563 | \$18,870 | \$18,019 | \$21,805 | \$25,963 | \$24,029 | \$27,774 |
| Services                            | \$27,107 | \$24,649 | \$15,024 | \$20,821 | \$15,875 | \$16,461 | \$15,778 | \$17,275 | \$20,089 | \$18,123 | \$19,311 |
| Government                          | \$31,030 | \$27,134 | \$23,999 | \$23,405 | \$30,455 | \$27,424 | \$24,964 | \$23,743 | \$24,797 | \$25,955 | \$28,442 |
| <b>All Industries:2000</b>          | \$30,687 | \$24,192 | \$18,807 | \$22,243 | \$24,472 | \$19,407 | \$24,499 | \$22,081 | \$21,508 | \$24,368 | \$21,410 |
| 1999 Annual Avg.                    | \$29,609 | \$23,267 | \$17,907 | \$21,068 | \$24,522 | \$18,835 | \$24,230 | \$21,581 | \$20,624 | \$23,998 | \$20,947 |
| Percent change                      | 3.6%     | 4.0%     | 5.0%     | 5.6%     | -0.2%    | 3.0%     | 1.1%     | 2.3%     | 4.3%     | 1.5%     | 2.2%     |

Source: DILHR, UC Covered Employment & Wages, Report 209, November 2001

Annual average wages increased in all but Douglas County in 2000, although some industries in each county reported a loss in wages. The lower wages in Douglas County occurred when the number of jobs increased faster than the increase in payroll. This is probably the result of an increase

in part time workers.

Overall, wages in the region increased 2.2 percent compared with a 3.6 percent increase statewide. Increases in annual average wages in six counties were lower than the state increase.

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